

Pleas of Justice: Few Rights, Little Justice



According to the reports, an estimated 53 million people, mostly women, are employed as domestic workers in private households around the world.

Countries with an ample number of migrant workers are permitting their workforce to go to others since they contribute to the country's economy. However, they remain the most vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and modern day slavery.

Sinclair James International Movement for Domestic Labor Reforms, a non-profit organization campaigning against domestic violence have catalogued exploitations faced by domestic workers at the hands of their employers, including forced labor, rape, daily beatings and being forced to work without any breaks. They are even underpaid and are not allowed to complain as the national laws will not side with them. In Middle Eastern countries, the Kafala System binds them to their employers and whatever is done with them are under the employers' discretion.

Though critical to the functioning of national economies, only 10% of domestic workers have the same basic labor rights as other sectors. A quarter of all domestic workers are not afforded any legal rights at all.

Since women are classified and reviewed as a level below than men in these countries because of religion and tradition, they are treated with inferior standing, much more since they are mere workers. Labor laws may exclude abuse of women from the punishment. They can effectively disappear behind closed doors in private doors with nobody aware of what is happening to them. Their passports are confiscated and no communication is allowed when not under supervision.

Human Rights Watch and others have documented horrendous abuse of maids and domestic servants in private households in the UAE, with widespread sexual violence, beatings, confiscation of passports and non-payment of wages.

Unmarried domestic workers who become pregnant can be charged with illicit relations and imprisoned with their babies. In Saudi Arabia, eight maids sheltering with their children at the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh could be jailed for illicit behavior, even though some of them had been raped by their employers, according to the NGO Migrante International.

Manila, Philippines, Jakarta, Indonesia and Sri Lanka are the main places to export migrant workers. There are more than thousands leaving their homes every week to work as domestic workers, never to return again or if they do, they have ample amounts of burns and some lack body parts or are even brought home in a casket.

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